

### BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: George I'i Brown III

George I'i Brown III, son of George I'i Brown, Jr. and Julia Jones Brown, was born March 22, 1945 in Honolulu. He grew up along with his sisters Irene, Julia, and Deborah, on a thirteen-acre piece of property on Waipi'o Peninsula. He is the great-great-grandson of John Papa I'i and the great-grandson of Irene I'i Brown Holloway.

He was educated at Punahou School; 'Iolani School; Hawai'i Preparatory Academy; Taft School, in Connecticut; Claremont Men's College, in California; and the University of Hawai'i, where he studied agriculture and graduated in 1969.

He was hired by Amfac in 1970 as an agricultural trainee, and then worked for a short time at O'ahu Sugar Company. He was transferred to Lihu'e Plantation on Kaua'i, where he worked for nine months. In 1971 he moved to Maui to work for Pioneer Mill Company and eventually became the civil engineer department head. After eight years with Pioneer Mill, he entered into various business ventures including designing and building houses and marketing wind surfing equipment.

He currently lives in Lahaina and is married to Donna L. Brown. He has three children, George "Keoki," Elise, and Whitney.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

George Brown III (GB)

Kula, Maui

October 3, 1998

BY: Holly Yamada (HY)

HY: This is an interview with George [I'i] Brown [III], we're at his property in Kula on Maui. It's October 3, 1998 and the interviewer is Holly Yamada.

Okay, let's just start with your birth date. When were you born?

GB: March 22, 1945.

HY: And where were you born?

GB: Born Queen's Hospital in Honolulu.

HY: And where did you grow up?

GB: At the family home out in Waipahu.

HY: Where in the birth order are you?

GB: I'm number one, the first son and only son. And then there were my three sisters after me.

HY: Can you describe the property you grew up on?

GB: Yes, it was the last of the [John] I'i Estate, as far as I know, that came into the family, given to my great-great grandfather, John Papa I'i. This property is located on Waipi'o Peninsula between Middle Loch and West Loch, Pearl Harbor. And it was a ten-acre piece that my dad [George I'i Brown] was able to buy from the Estate when it was sold in 1950. Subsequently, he added three acres to it, purchased from O'ahu Shipyard, as I recall.

HY: Maybe you can talk about the house that you grew up in, just what your memories of it are.

GB: I think it started off with the main house. I remember sleeping in what later became the den, but it was my room, and then when Irene [Brown, GB's sister] was born, we both slept in that room, which was next to my parents' room. It was a rambling house, fairly long, we spent most of the time outside on the *lānai*. There was a *pūne'e* out there that we'd take naps on and there was some other furniture. And then we would go into the kitchen. But everything

centered around the *lānai*. And the rooms, basically, were connected to the *lānai*. So, as an example, you couldn't go from the dining room to the living room, the formal living room, you had to go out on the *lānai*. And also into the bedrooms, you had to go to the *lānai*. So it was basically outside living and it was great, a great way to live.

HY: Is it thirteen acres, is that right?

GB: It's thirteen acres now, yeah. It was ten acres originally, then my dad bought the additional three acres. Anyway, the main house was built, was completed, as I recall my dad telling me, 1941. I was born 1945 and it's the house that I lived in until I moved out when I was married.

Dad and Mom [Julia "Judy" Jones Brown] built a cottage for us in 1949. So that's where the kids stayed, which was adjacent to the main house. Then they built the tennis court and swimming pool which was quite a distance from the main house. Then tore down the old garage and made the new garage and utility house. So it ended up to be quite a large house, maybe 8[,000] or 10,000 square feet overall. Very rambling and very gracious. Very nice place to grow up. I have friends who loved to come down, go out on the property and hunt and swim and coast down the hills on bicycles and all kind of stuff.

HY: And tell me a little bit about your mom's background.

GB: My mom was born in Salisbury, Maryland, and grew up there. Became a teacher and met my dad when she was teaching at Annapolis, [Maryland]. He was at the [U.S.] Naval Academy doing post-graduate work during World War II, before he then was assigned to the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor. So they met there and got married. And she came out during the war to go live with him at Waipi'o, Waipahu, during World War II.

HY: And did you have much contact with her side of the family?

GB: Not a whole lot.

HY: Are they all still in Maryland?

GB: Well, the ones that are remaining, some of them are. Most of her older relatives have passed away, including her parents. Her sister lives in Salisbury and then another sister lives down in North Carolina. And she has two nephews and a niece that live back in the East Coast. We don't see them very much.

Basically we're out here in Hawai'i and a long ways to go in those days, particularly during the war, and after the war with plane trip nine hours to the West Coast and then another nine hours across the country. They tended to be provincial in the sense that they stayed in Hawai'i a lot. So they didn't go back there to see them very much. I did see my [maternal] grandparents [Woolford Jones family] a few times.

HY: So she had no previous Hawai'i connections?

GB: No she didn't, no.

HY: Okay. And what about your paternal grandparents [George I'i and Julia White Brown]? How

much contact did you have with them growing up?

GB: Well my grandfather passed away in 1946, just prior to my first birthday party. And so I don't remember him at all. But my grandmother I saw all the time. And we lived on and off with her for my whole life. I felt welcome at her house, maybe even more welcome (chuckles) there than at my parents'. She spoiled me.

HY: Would you actually have residence there, or you just would stay overnight?

GB: No, sometimes I'd stay overnight, sometimes I'd stay for the weekend, sometimes I'd stay for two or three weeks at a time. When my mother was teaching during the war, I was a little kid, I'd go stay with my grandmother. And it was not unusual to stay there for quite a while. She took care of me when my mother was teaching.

And then that just continued through the rest of my life. I would spend the night there anytime I wanted. I had my own room there, and just drop in anytime. And she was always very happy to see me. And then when I got married, I stayed at the cottage on her house for about three years before being transferred to Kaua'i to work at the [Lihu'e] Plantation, sugar plantation.

HY: Maybe you can talk about things like what kind of foods you folks ate at home.

GB: We ate all kinds of food. I do remember eating a lot of *poi*. And from when I was very small, *poi* was always a pretty good supplement for our diet. We ate a lot of rice, vegetables that we grew on the property, and then we would have chicken or beef. We'd have fish when Dad caught it. And sometimes Mom would buy it at the store. We'd go over to Waipahu and shop at the meat market, Pung Kui [Store], and he'd come over and deliver what my mom wanted. And she'd make her order at the store, and sometimes carry it out, and sometimes he would deliver it in an old kind of a panel truck.

We ate fruit, we had a lot of mangos on the property. We ate mangos to the point where I don't like mangos now. When there were mangos in season, we ate it breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Breakfast we usually had eggs and cereal and fruit and juice. Lunch we'd have sandwiches or we'd be eating at school, school lunch. And then dinner, my mom would prepare some sort of a meat and some sort of vegetable and rice, and dessert. We'd all sit around formally in the dining room. We didn't have TV then, so we'd play games after dinner, card games and board games, and it was a time when all the family got together. Dad would come home from work and all us kids would—not Debbie—but Irene and myself primarily. And then Julia when she came along, five years younger than I am. And then finally Debbie, when Debbie was born in 1955, we got a TV. And I was ten years old. And that's when I started watching TV, half an hour a day, about four-thirty to five o'clock in the afternoon. But before that it was pretty nice. Without TV and without outside distractions it was a nice family unit.

HY: You said your mom cooked, or did you also have domestic help?

GB: Yes, yeah we did. She [GB's mother] cooked sometimes, and lot of times we had domestic help. But she would prepare the menu when the domestic help was cooking. And we'd be served out in the dining room. When I was smaller, up to age six or seven, I used to eat out in the kitchen and my parents would eat out in the dining room. I didn't like eating in the kitchen



very much because the domestic help would not let me drink milk until I finished my food because they somehow knew that if I filled up on milk then I wouldn't eat my food. But sometimes hard to swallow my food without milk. I think I used to always fake (chuckles) that I ate my dinner to try to drink milk before eating the food.

HY: Were these people that lived there as well, or did they come in?

GB: They lived there.

HY: Where did they live?

GB: There was a couple of small rooms and a bathroom that was attached to the kitchen of the house, and they lived out there.

HY: That's the same structure that's actually still there, right?

GB: The same structure, yeah. And when the utility house was built, bigger rooms were built out there, with the bathrooms shared. And that's where the domestic help stayed at that point.

HY: Do you remember any of their names?

GB: I do. Shirley [Oda] was one. Mrs. [Elizabeth] Neal was a cook. We had Nancy [Kimura], she came later on. And she still lives next door. Earlier on we did have a couple of Swiss women that came for a two-year kind of a stay. My parents paid for their tickets over and they stayed. One did the cooking duties, and one did the cleaning duties for the house. And we learned to speak French. I was about five and six and seven years old, those two years. And then two more came for another two years, but they only lasted about a year. So it was a total of about three years there. That's what I remember.

HY: What about---did they have families with them?

GB: The Swiss lady, the girls, they were both actually in their early twenties, and no they didn't, but Shirley did. She worked for the family for a long time. She married one of the yardmen. His name was Shohei Oda. And they had Wesley. And they lived out in the utility house. Shirley came from 'Ewa, and we would take her back there on Saturday nights or Sundays, and she would spend some time with her family back there. She must have been in her late teens when she started working for my parents. And she met Shohei because he worked for us also. And Wesley, I think, is a doctor or a . . . He's a smart guy, went to some big Mainland school on a scholarship.

HY: Now was he a peer with you . . .

GB: No.

HY: . . . or was there a big age difference?

GB: Big age difference. Because when I was, say ten years old, Shirley must have been about eighteen or nineteen, eighteen to twenty. So I would say Wesley is, guessing now, maybe thirty-five.

HY: He's younger than Debbie, too.

GB: Yeah.

HY: Now you said that you had a little garden?

GB: More than a little garden. It was a fairly extensive garden. It was on two different parts of the property. One part was out by the doghouse, which was a house that my parents built when they brought rottweilers into the territory. The first rottweilers in Hawai'i were brought in by my parents. And there was an extensive garden out in that part of the property. And there was another extensive garden over where the head yardman had his house. His name was Watanabe [GB called him "Bobby"]. And he had his own garden, and then a garden for the house, too. So we took care of both of those, his own garden, garden for the house. He had chickens and orchids, so I used to go over there and play with the chickens and get in the chicken coop. He didn't like that (chuckles) very much—lot of chickens. And we grew all kinds of table vegetable.

HY: Was it for your family, or was there also any commercial aspect to it?

GB: No, no, it was strictly for the family. At that time, Waipahu was way out in the middle of nowhere, really. And we were a mile or so, or more, from Waipahu. And the property we grew up on was bordered by swamp on one side and cane fields on the other. And on the third side there was my great-grandmother's old house, and kind of a dairy, cattle in a kind of a pasture. And the other side was kind of barren, and at some distance there's a little pig farm and a little village of plantation workers. So it was very, very, very rural. Now there's a golf course on one side and the rest of it is surrounded by houses.

HY: Now was there anybody living in your [great-]grandmother's [Irene Haalou Kahalelaukoa I'i Brown Holloway's] old house at that time?

GB: It was rented out to different people. And in the back where she had her retainers' houses, domestic help houses, there was a family. The Higaki family lived back there.

And that was part of the property that the navy took after the attack on Pearl Harbor. They took Waipi'o Peninsula, and also my great-grandmother's house. Because all those lands were protruding into Pearl Harbor.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

HY: Okay, so we're talking about your great-grandmother's. . . . Oh, you said the Higaki family, is that right, lived there?

GB: Mm hmm [yes].

HY: And what did they---were they . . .

GB: I'm not---sorry.

HY: Go ahead. Were they independently there, or were they affiliated with your family in some

way?

GB: I got the impression that they were affiliated with the family, with my great-grandmother, but she died in 1922. So maybe they were hired to help keep care of the grounds and were still there after the navy took it over in 1941. That could've been it, but I'm not really sure. That's what I thought, I thought that they had somehow worked for the family and they remained on the property during the war and after the war, until the navy sold it. And it was developed as a subdivision.

HY: I'm not sure if there---were there fish ponds there when you were growing up?

GB: No there weren't.

HY: They were gone?

GB: They were gone. The navy dredged parts of Pearl Harbor and filled those up. Two ponds that my dad told me about. And apparently they were a hundred acres each. So they probably were---possibly the biggest two fish ponds in Hawai'i. And the navy filled 'em up. So the Ted Makalena Golf Course is on the former fish pond [Loko E'o].

HY: So you grew up in kind of an isolated area, as far as playing with neighborhood children.

GB: Right, there weren't any. There wasn't a neighborhood.

HY: Yeah. So who did you play with?

GB: Well, I played with Watanabe's sons, Seiji and Tomo. Tomo was older, quite a bit older. But I played with Seiji, and Seiji, he was probably four or five years older than I was.

HY: What kind of stuff would you do?

GB: Oh, all kinds of things. (Chuckles) We got into trouble a lot. We'd go out in the cane fields and run all over the fields and play in the water. That was the best time for playing in the fields, when they were watering the cane. We could go and have mud fights and running around and sliding in the mud and all that kind of stuff. So we would do that.

Also, Seiji was really interested in boats and mechanical things. And so he always used to have a model boat, or a mechanical this or mechanical that. So we were always looking at mechanical things, and playing around with those erector sets, those types of things. We'd go down in the swamp and he was always thinking of different things to do. He'd make a dam and he'd make a little hydroelectric plant down there. It was really interesting to be younger than he was and get interested in a lot of the engineering, mechanical things that he was interested in.

And it carries on for me till today, we're still doing a lot of mechanical work. Interesting kind of things with my hands, working on vehicles and tractors. That was a part because of Seiji and his inquisitive nature. And in part because of my dad, who was an engineer from Princeton [University]. And being out there alone, isolated I should say, where we would have to figure out things to do. So it was always a challenge to do that. And so I became, by

nature, pretty inquisitive.

HY: Now how---you have an interesting family history. How aware of that were you? Was it something that was taught to you by your folks, or is it something you learned about maybe later?

GB: Both. I had not read my great-great grandfather's book [*Fragments of Hawaiian History*], it wasn't published until, I believe, the late [19]50s. And my first, say, fifteen years of my life, I only heard stories from my father and uncles and grandmother. Not too many from my mom because she wasn't here, but she would recount some of the stories that she heard from my father and uncles. And also my Great-uncle Francis [I'i Brown] told stories. We heard a lot of stories about him, too. Our Great-aunt Rose would come over and tell stories, too.

HY: Aunt Rose, I think last time you---she's your, she's Francis' half . . .

GB: Sister. Her father was [Charles Augustus] "Cabby" Brown, Francis' father.

HY: Oh, and a different . . .

GB: A different mother.

HY: . . . mother. Oh, I see, okay. And I know your Uncle Kenny [Kenneth Francis Brown] had a pretty close relationship with Francis.

GB: Yes.

HY: Did you have much interaction with him? With Francis?

GB: A fair amount. We used to go over there with the family at Christmastime, and other times of year, Thanksgiving and stuff, and see him. Occasionally he would show up at my grandmother's house for one of the meals, not too often. But we went and visited Uncle Francis quite a bit on those occasions. And then we'd also go up to his places on the Big Island, and he'd be there occasionally. He also had a house up in Carmel, [California], we'd visited him up there, too. We saw him fairly frequently, and he'd come out to Waipi'o for parties and that type of thing. We'd see him all over the place. I had a good relationship with Uncle Francis.

HY: Were parties at Waipi'o mostly family, or were other people involved?

GB: Lot of other people would come, too.

HY: Were they business-related, or was it just social?

GB: It was basically social. We did have, as I recall, one strictly business---it wasn't necessarily a business party, it was a party put on by my dad's company that he and Sam [Samuel G.] Wight started, Honolulu Armored Car Service. And had a *lū'au* one year for all the employees of that company as well as the families' wives and kids and so on. It wasn't necessarily a business party, but it was a party for the employees of the company. But other than that, it was basically all social.

HY: Maybe you can talk about your schooling, where did you go to school?

GB: I started off and went to Central Union [Pre-School] for one year, and then a year at Punahou [School]. And for some reason my parents sent me to 'Iolani [School] for second grade, third grade, and half of fourth grade. As I recall, the reason I was sent to 'Iolani was that I wasn't working up to my potential [at Punahou]. So worked up to my potential at 'Iolani. I got on the honor roll, and my parents decided, well, they could send me back to Punahou because maybe I'd mended my ways in studying. And then I went back to Punahou; I had not mended my ways. (Chuckles) Just that the teachers were stricter at 'Iolani.

So then they sent me to Hawai'i Prep[aratory Academy], thinking that that would be a good boarding school to go to. Other families in Honolulu were sending their sons up to Hawai'i Prep also. And I got to know a lot of people up there, too. But then my dad had been sent away to prep school, and that's probably why I got sent to Hawai'i Prep. And then my parents decided that I should go back East to school at the same time that a couple of my cousins were going back East to schools, Zadoc and Alan. So Zadoc went first, and Alan and I next couple of years, went back East to prep school also.

So went to prep school in Connecticut, place called Taft [School], then went to college for a year out at Claremont Men's College outside of Los Angeles, and then returned to the University of Hawai'i. I graduated with a bachelor of science degree in agriculture.

HY: When you first went to school on the Mainland then, what kind of adjustment was there for you?

GB: Well, it was a pretty difficult adjustment because the sophistication of the kids in school, their upbringing, maybe it's not upbringing, but it was just a whole different way of doing things. In the islands everybody was open, and if you said something, you did what you said you were going to do, and so on. And you wouldn't swear, you were very conscious of what you said, and very conscious of other people's feelings. And you didn't want to. . . . If you said something bad to somebody, you basically would start a fight.

HY: You're saying that this was not so when you went to the Mainland?

GB: This was not so when I went to the Mainland. I was just absolutely shocked at what my schoolmates would say to other schoolmates. I had a hard time adjusting to the—I did say sophistication but it wasn't. It was—I don't know. I don't know what it is. Hawai'i, today, is changing the same way. Has been changing for a long time, in the same kind of way.

HY: Did it change the way you thought about your home then in Hawai'i, or did your perspective of that change at all?

GB: Well, the perspective didn't necessarily change, but the desire to be back here and live here, and live in that kind of a system—easier, seemingly more honest, more open—I wasn't prepared to deal with the insincerities and the differences in language, the differences in [the way] people [treated each other] back East. I didn't think we had any problems with any of the various races in Hawai'i, it's kind of a melting pot. I would go back East and they'd be bad-mouthing this nationality or that nationality, which it never had occurred to me. And there was a lot of ethnic jokes and those kinds of things. (Chuckles) We have a lot of ethnic jokes



in Hawai'i, too. But there was a difference. There's an innocence that kind of pervaded society here [and] there was no innocence back on the East Coast.

HY: How do you think they thought about you, coming from Hawai'i? Or was that something that you hadn't even considered?

GB: Well they didn't know much about Hawai'i at all. And so I told them all kinds of stories. And they would ask why I was back on the East Coast in school. And I said, "Well, the missionaries captured me, came from my village and captured me." Sent me back there for school. And, "No, we didn't have cars, we didn't have electricity, and we lived in grass shacks."

They would start off the conversation by asking, "Do you live in a grass shack?" So I told them all kind of stories about living in grass shacks. So maybe I wasn't as honest as I could have been either.

(Laughter)

HY: Now you mentioned that your folks wanted to straighten you out, and they put you in 'Iolani for a while, and then you behaved and they put you back in Punahou. Were they thinking that Punahou was actually a preferable place for you to be, but—I'm not sure what their thinking was about that.

GB: Well, I don't know what it was either. I was second grade and I was not privy to what their thoughts were, or their meetings with teachers, or whatever they did. It was basically, "Okay, you're going to 'Iolani next year. We think it's a good idea. You're not studying at Punahou, so we think 'Iolani might be a better school for studying for you." So I went there, and the teachers were more strict. I don't know why. I don't think the school was any easier. I did have a difficult time reading. And maybe that was a part of it. Maybe my parents felt that I wasn't getting the education, particularly in reading, that I needed at Punahou, and maybe they thought 'Iolani was a better school for that. So that's why I went to 'Iolani. And I got very good grades and they thought that maybe I had straightened out, maybe I had learned to read, or whatever it was, they let me go back to Punahou.

And basically my friends that I knew from my parents' friends' children, people I had played with since I was out at Waipi'o, very isolated, the people that I was able to play with were children of my parents' friends. And almost all of them are at Punahou. And so that's why I wanted to go back to Punahou. I wanted to play with my friends, or the friends that I had made through my parents' friends.

HY: Who were some of those classmates?

GB: Well there's a whole lot of them, there's the Pietsch family, David and Michael Pietsch. My cousins Alan [Brown] and Zadoc [Brown, Jr.] were both at Punahou at the time. And Kenny's [Kenneth Brown's] kids were at Punahou a little bit later on, Laura [Brown] was there. The Cooke family, their kids were at Punahou. The Judd family was at Punahou. All kinds of people that my parents socialized with had their children at Punahou. And kids like Balbi Atherton was there, all kinds of people. So I wanted to go back there and be able to play with and continue in my relationship with those kids.



HY: Did you have kind of a separate life then, with your school life and then your fairly isolated home life with the few kids on the property there? Or did your friends from Punahou come over and spend time?

GB: A lot of them would come over and spend time, and those are the weekends that I really enjoyed. And they really enjoyed it, too, because it was out in the country. And a lot of the kids loved to come out there. Every year in the lower grades there'd be a day where the whole class would go out there as a kind of a class homeroom day where you'd go out someplace. It was usually a private home where you'd go out and have a day of play. And invariably, all my classes, and my sister's classes, would come out to Waipi'o. There's a couple other places we would go, but invariably it was out there, people would always want to come out there. It was out in the country, and we had a swimming pool, and land, and bicycles, and wagons, and we had a tennis court. People just loved to do that.

So anytime the kids would have a chance to come out, they'd love to come out and spend the night out there. And my parents were always very open to having kids out there when I was young. And so they really enjoyed it. I kind of liked it too because I was like the head kid, so to speak, out there. (HY laughs.) And it was my parents' house. So it was nice in that respect. But in other respects, day-to-day living in a subdivision or in a community, those things weren't there. And I would be interested to find out if Seiji felt the same way, you know. But he went to school over in Waipahu, so he had a lot of Waipahu friends.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

(Geese audible in the background.)

HY: Okay, the last thing you said was you were wondering if Seiji would have had the same impression.

GB: Yeah, I wonder. Then I thought that maybe not, because he was older than I was, he went to school in Waipahu, he could ride his bike over to Waipahu, whereas my mom wouldn't let me. She was afraid I was too young or I don't know what. She didn't want me to go to Waipahu. But I'd sneak over to Waipahu anyway.

(Laughter)

GB: I'd watch for her car, if her car was coming, you know. And there's just swamps on the side of the road and stuff, and fields, and so if I saw her car coming, I'd put my bike down and kind of hide in the grass.

There are no houses or anything. We used to stop on the side of the road between our house and Waipahu, and there was a swamp there, too, and we'd see little crayfish right by the side of the road. People would be fishing along this little road. Anyway, yeah, I would go hide in the grass, and Mrs. Watanabe would walk back and forth to Waipahu, and when she'd see me she'd kind of scold me because she knew that I wasn't supposed to go over there. I'd say,

"Please don't tell my mom." And she would never tell my mom.

But Seiji could ride his bike over there. It's probably about a mile. And lot of times, since I was five years younger than he was, he'd play with me sometimes, but sometimes he'd be playing with his friends in Waipahu, and I couldn't go over there. So maybe Seiji didn't have that same sense of isolation that I felt at times.

But the other side of it was when my friends came up from Honolulu, they just loved it. They just would have loved to live out there, I'm sure. So there's both sides of that, the isolation, and because of that isolation, some of the good aspects.

HY: Now I think the last time you mentioned hunting. You did some hunting. And your dad got you interested in it?

GB: Yeah, he did.

HY: Yeah. What kind of hunting would you do?

GB: Well, basically bird hunting. Once in a while we would go out at night and there's a lot of *kiawe* trees and rats would make their nests up in the trees. So sometimes at night we would shoot rats. But we'd hunt birds.

HY: What kind of birds?

GB: Doves and mynah birds.

HY: Mostly for sport?

GB: Well, we used to eat and. . . . I never ate the mynah birds. Dad used to eat the mynah birds, but I didn't eat the mynah birds. But I ate the doves. Dad said, "If you shoot 'em, you eat 'em."

When I said hunting I also—more often than not, we were target practicing. We set out cans or bottles. And we had our own garbage dumps on the property. We had [a dump] for household goods in a certain area. And then we'd have [a dump] for the leafy trash and the branches. We probably had five or six different dumps on the property. But two of the dumps were household goods—bottles, cans, those kinds of things. Not a whole lot of plastic in those days. I don't remember any plastic until I was a teenager.

But we set up bottles or cans in the dump, and we'd shoot 'em. They'd usually be in a hole in the ground, so we'd be shooting down at maybe fifty or seventy-five feet away, hundred feet away, into an embankment, into the ground. And it was basically target practice. That's what we did, more often than not, when we're hunting. Probably 90 percent of the time we're doing that, we're just shooting at targets. We'd do some clay pigeon shooting and stuff like that, too.

HY: Was this mostly the boys?

GB: Yeah, boys.

HY: When you say, "we," is this your classmates?

GB: Yeah.

HY: I know Zadoc mentioned he used to come and . . .

GB: Yeah, more with Zadoc and Alan, but some of my other classmates. My dad was careful about guns, and he didn't want just anybody doing it. There was a few people like Montie Cooke, another fellow that used to come over and shoot. My dad knew that he was schooled in hunting because he used to go to Moloka'i and hunt on Moloka'i Ranch. Montie and I were in the same—as a matter of fact, Montie and I were in 'Iolani together, too.

HY: You mentioned your mom was a schoolteacher.

GB: Yes.

HY: Where did she teach school?

GB: She taught school over in Waipahu. Not too long. Once Irene was born, I think once the war was over, she stopped.

HY: What school did she teach at?

GB: I don't know. There was a August Ahrens [School], I think. I'm not sure.

HY: You said you went to Hawai'i Prep?

GB: Yes.

HY: Was that an adjustment at all? Suddenly you're in boarding school.

GB: Suddenly I'm in boarding school, but with some of the fellows that I knew from Punahou, and some new people. It was an adjustment, however, at the time, an older cousin was the manager of Parker Ranch. And also my grandmother had a house up there. And she would come up quite a bit. So she would come up and take me out to lunch or dinner, or I could spend time with her. So she'd come up quite often and do that.

It was an adjustment in that I was away from my family. On the other hand, being out at Waipi'o on the property, I was fairly isolated and I had to be on my own a lot of the time. And so this adjustment to Hawai'i Prep was not as hard on me as it might have been to somebody else, I think. I remember being homesick a little bit in the beginning. Not too long.

Montie Cooke was up there, and couple other guys that I knew from Punahou. So I get to see more friends basically all the time up there. So it was an adjustment, but it was just one of those things that. . . . I enjoyed it, I enjoyed Hawai'i Prep a lot.

HY: So quite different than your Mainland experience then?

GB: Yeah, yeah.

HY: Now was school something—the academic side—that was important to your folks?

GB: Important to my folks, and I didn't put a whole lot of importance in it.

HY: Did they discuss with you. . . . I mean, were you expected to study, your mom being a schoolteacher and whatnot.

GB: Yes.

HY: Were there subjects that interested you?

GB: Science interested me. I liked science.

HY: Were there any particular teachers that had an influence on you?

GB: Well, not much out at Hawai'i Prep, there was Mr. Burnett, who was a science teacher. And I enjoyed going into lab and fooling around with the lab equipment.

HY: What school was this at?

GB: Hawai'i Prep. Probably the teachers that most influenced me, other than college teachers, was a man by the name of Mark Potter who was an art teacher at the prep school I went to back at Connecticut. I think in part because I didn't really like to study, I never really got a good education. I never really learned how to read. I think that was important because my grandmother tried to teach me how to read, and she didn't know how to teach anybody how to read. And she'd correct me, "No, that's not it."

So I learned I better not to say anything, otherwise she's gonna yell at me, which was really great because all the way through school I basically didn't read. And I took very good notes and I remembered things. And I looked and figured out how things went together. And I did okay in school, and okay in college. Not really good grades until I got married [when I was a student] at University of Hawai'i. I got on the honor roll again. But still, I wasn't reading. I was taking very good notes and listening in class and figuring out what the teacher wanted. I didn't learn to read well until later on.

HY: I wanted to ask you about just the expectation of it. Seemed like all your family would go to boarding school. And was that something that you thought—it wasn't something that you thought about? You just were expected to go?

GB: Yeah. I didn't feel I had any real say. Whatever I said was immaterial to what my parents thought I should do. And so it never occurred to me to say, "No, I want to stay at Punahou." Or, "I want to stay at Hawai'i Prep."

HY: You always knew you were going to go?

GB: Yeah. It was something that I allowed my parents, or believed that my parents were finding the right path for me. And if the right path was prep school, it was prep school. If it was going back East to prep school, it was going back East. Because my father and uncle and aunt and grandfather and great-uncle Francis went back East. I wonder where Aunt Rose went, if

she went back East. I never thought about that.

HY: Okay, after you went and you spent time at Claremont, did you go to Claremont right after school then?

GB: Mm hmm.

HY: What was the thinking there, why did you want to go there?

GB: Well, it was a good college and I had gotten into several colleges, and my parents decided that Claremont would be a good place to go. Again, I just kind of abdicated . . .

HY: Oh, they made those decisions, too?

GB: Yeah. I thought that I might want to go to Menlo [College], because my cousin Alan was going to Menlo, and some other friends. "Cully" [McCully] Judd was going to Menlo, and a few other people. And it was a junior college, and my parents said, "No, we want you to go to Claremont."

HY: Did you know at that time what you wanted to study?

GB: No, I didn't. When I got to Claremont, the advisor said, "Well, everybody's filling up into groups, and you've been assigned this group, so you go talk with your advisor," and all this other stuff before school started. So I went, and it was kind of a social get-together with other students. And it turns out that it was in the business school. Because there was business, government, and Italian, all kinds of stuff at Claremont. And I said, "I don't want to be in business school, I want to be in art school." And so they let me major up at Scripps [College], which was a girls' school next door—associated colleges. So I majored for a year in art up at Scripps.

HY: How did you get interested in art? You mentioned this one teacher.

GB: Yeah, I don't know. I always liked drawing and I still do that today. Designing things, drawing things, I've done that forever. Maybe it was a part of this inquisitiveness—[the influence of my dad on the] engineering [side and] Seiji on the other side, putting things together and thinking up things. And I would sketch 'em out. And so that's what I liked about that. I'm still doing that here. I designed the house I live in now.

HY: This in Lahaina?

GB: Yeah, Nāpili. And I also designed the house that I'm gonna make for my son down here on the lower part of the property.

HY: So after you majored for a year in art, what happened?

GB: Well, I came back to University of Hawai'i. I had not studied very much back at Claremont, and they suggested that I take a year off and get a job, go into the military, do something. Take a year off and come back a year later. And for some reason I felt that I should go back to school, so I went to University of Hawai'i. And I also liked agriculture because I worked

out in the fields. I like working outside. So I got into the agriculture program. I had been working at the 'Ewa Plantation for a few summers when I was in prep school in a schoolboy gang out there, then in the hoe seed gang experiment, and I really enjoyed that. That's when I decided that I wanted to go into agriculture.

HY: This is when you were like sixteen years old?

GB: Yeah.

HY: Somewhere around in there.

GB: Yeah, seventeen, eighteen.

HY: So the summers after school you would . . .

GB: Yeah. I would work in the sugarcane fields. And I hadn't really thought of that when I was in prep school, that that's what I might want to do. But then when I got into college, I knew I didn't want to go into the day-to-day kind of business stuff that I saw some of my friends' fathers doing, my uncles doing, my dad doing. Working for a company or working on their own. I wanted to be outside. I loved being outside. It just all kind of all coalesced after the year in at Claremont, where they said take a year off. It all coalesced into, hey, what about agriculture? I wanted to live in Hawai'i, I didn't consider living anyplace else. The family that I knew was here. I loved the ocean activities and the friends and family that were here in Hawai'i. Although I'd been to the Mainland for school, I never ever considered ever living there. It was basically out of the question. I mean, it wasn't even out of the question, it wasn't even in my mind. And so I thought that agriculture would be a great place to have a job.

As a matter of fact, my dad's first job was at a sugar plantation—Waialua, on O'ahu, after he graduated from Princeton. It's not that I went into agriculture because of that, but being isolated out in Waipi'o, and playing in the sugarcane fields, and out there, not in a subdivision, not in town, it kind of molded me into this agriculture [career]. As you can see, I'm back in it again.

(Laughter)

GB: I'd much rather work on one of these little tractors over here than sit behind a desk doing something with paperwork. And maybe again my grandmother trying to teach me to read, and me not wanting to read. . . . Everything that's happened to me in the past has led me to this point. I love being who I am right now. And it's interesting to see how this little nudge or this little move, this little thing at Claremont saying, "Don't come back," and my grandmother yelling at me for trying to get me to read, these kinds of things. . . . I mean, if I had been a terrific reader, I might be sitting in downtown Honolulu right now in some big corporation and not getting out like I enjoy.

HY: Did you spend any time involved at all in any of your father's businesses? I know you mentioned the armored car [business] and then he had the . . .

GB: No, no I didn't. He never really said much about his business. I mean, he never encouraged me to follow his footsteps. As a matter of fact, he did say, when I was working plantation, he



said this to me, he said, "I wish I had stayed in the plantation."

HY: Oh, is that right?

GB: Yeah, that's what he said.

HY: Did he tell you why?

GB: He didn't tell me why, but I get the impression that he enjoyed being outside, he enjoyed working outdoors. He worked for the family, for the I'i Estate. And he was outdoors a lot. He used to take me around when I was a little kid, and we would go to the various farmers that were renting land from the I'i Estate in the gulleys between the cane fields or the pineapple fields. And every month he would go and collect the rent and talk to the farmers about how they were doing and get some vegetables or whatever. And it was really nice to go from this little gulley to that little gulley and talk with these guys. I was tiny then, four or five years old, riding around in a truck with my dad, and I thought that was really neat.

HY: This was when he was working for the I'i Estate?

GB: Yes.

HY: And then there was the Brown Fund.

GB: Yeah, that was later on. Zadoc's father started that. And it was a mutual fund, and he worked there, he helped my uncle run that. That was stocks and bonds and that kind of thing. And Zadoc is in it right today, and his son Zadoc, III is in it, in the same kind of business. And I feel so fortunate to be able to be outside doing other things, rather than sitting in the office doing those kinds of things.

HY: So you're back in Hawai'i then. . . . Oh, what did you do that year between Claremont and coming back to UH [University of Hawai'i]?

GB: Well, I worked that summer on 'Ewa Plantation and then went that fall. . . . I didn't take a year off.

HY: Oh, I see.

GB: Claremont told me to, [but] I didn't. I worked in the summertime . . .

HY: What did you do on the plantation? What was your job?

GB: Well, my first job out there I showed up at 6:30 in the morning, whatever we had to do to get in the trucks. I guess we had to work at 6:30, so I had to be there at 6:00 in the morning, get on the trucks. I was in a schoolboy gang.

And what we had to do was to, at the ends of the furrows, where the machine would come in and plant the seed, the cane seed, we'd have to turn it around and it couldn't make the furrow at the end. So we had to, by hand, make the last ten or so feet of the furrow by hand, with a hoe, which we call *hō hana*. And cover the seed, and then there was a cement pipe that went

from the irrigation ditch into that particular furrow. We had to fix that up so it was clear and so on, then the *hanawai* man would come and water the cane after that. But we'd have to make by hand the end of each furrow.

And this went on forever. And there'd be a schoolboy gang of fifteen or twenty schoolboys. The *luna* would say, "Brown, this is your ten." And then once you finish your ten you go to the end of the line and you get assigned ten more, and ten more. It just went on all summer long for the schoolboy gang.

I was working along, and I did about three times the amount of any of the other guys. And they said, "Slow down, you're going too fast." Even the supervisor told me, "Don't go so fast." I did this for two days, and it was the most boring job (HY chuckles) that I ever, ever did. And between people telling me to slow down, and so on, I was going to quit because it was terrible, boring, boring, boring work.

And they needed somebody to go on the hoe seed gang to load seed from the fields where they cut the seed, and take it by truck. Me and another fella would load the truck. Anyway, so they needed somebody for that crew. And there's two of us, so they picked me and another guy out of the schoolboy gang to do that. And they figured that I was working hard and maybe I would be better working at this because that was more physical labor than doing the furrows, which was a lot of physical labor, but this was even more so.

But I enjoyed that job because what I got to do was to load the seed in the seed field, I got to know all the guys that cut the cane, men and women—lot of women cutting cane. And load the seed up in the truck, and then take it over to the fields that they were replanting, ride in the truck, so we get a break, get to the field, and then the supervisor would tell us where to put it in the field, where the spot was, and how many bundles. And the bundles weighed from anywhere from thirty-five, forty pounds, to about sixty pounds, but they averaged about fifty pounds a bundle. And there were so many seeds per bundle.

And what I liked about it is you had a little more thinking, a little more brain utilization, than just making these furrows and covering seed. We would go to the different fields and figure out where the supervisor wanted to—we'd find notes from him. Sometimes he'd be across the field and he'd give us hand signals, telling us how many bundles to put there and so we had to learn what his hand signals were. Then we'd go back to seed field, get some more, and then take it to another replant field.

So I really enjoyed that. But we handled---I personally would lift about fifty-two tons of cane a day. And I got into pretty good shape. And I was playing football at prep school at the time. So I got pretty strong from my football experience back at Taft. So I enjoyed that very much.

And then the next summer, because I worked so well there, they put me in the ag[riculture] experiment gang, which was an even greater job, because we'd go all over the plantation taking samples of cane. And then we'd cut them every morning and we'd come back into the factory, I mean the little shop where we worked, which was in the factory, and we'd process the samples. And we'd cut the samples up and find out what the sheath moisture was, in order for the agriculturists to decide when to withdraw water and how to ripen off the field. So we'd do that.

And we'd have different varieties of cane that we'd plant in different plots, and we'd measure them, and we'd harvest those, too, in two years. And weigh the cane, figure out if this is a better variety than that variety. So that was the best job that I had, and the last job that I had as a schoolboy is in that gang. And I really enjoyed that gang. And I get to know the guys. When I come back in the next summer they'd all be there, most of them.

HY: You remember who was your supervisor? Do you remember?

GB: Well, Jerry [Katsuji] Wakasuki was supervisor in the ag experiment gang. Actually, he was the assistant department head. Fellow by the name of Mr. [William] Livingston was the department head. Jerry Wakasuki was the assistant. And then a fellow by the name of [Yujiro] Numasaki was the direct supervisor [field foreman] for that [ag experiment] gang.

And I don't remember the schoolboy gang [supervisor]—oh, his name was Masa[aki] Oshiro. Masa[aki] Oshiro was the supervisor. Now he was like an assistant department head, too. He was the one who picked me and said, "Brown's a good worker, go to the haul seed gang." And a fellow in the haul seed gang, I can't remember, I can't remember who he was.

HY: Now you were living at home then during this time?

GB: Yes.

HY: I would assume that this area was changing as you're—you're going to the Mainland, you're coming back in the summers.

GB: Yeah, yeah, it did. Slowly the cane fields were replaced by housing. And the drive over to 'Ewa in the morning was different as more subdivisions came up. But it was still a very rural drive over to 'Ewa in the morning.

HY: How did that change the activities that you did there? Or did it?

GB: It did change my activities quite a bit, because when I was a kid I would ride my bicycle—after the time when I was small and my mother wouldn't let me ride, to the time when I got somewhat bigger and then I just went riding. My grandmother gave me my first bike and that's the one that I would hide in the grass when I was a little kid. But then as I got bigger, she gave me another bike, and it was a three-speed English bike. It was a Schwinn but they call 'em English bikes because it had speeds and tiny tires, [not] the big, fat tires, and this was a faster bike. So I'd ride that all over, down Waipi'o Peninsula, all around by Pearl Harbor, and there's half-sunken ships and stuff, and there were landing crafts, and I'd go on there and look around. And there's an old air strip down there [where] O'ahu Sugar have their spray plane, and I'd go check out the plane, checking out their equipment and everything. And at that time sugar was grown on the Waipi'o Peninsula, still is today, parts of it.

I'd go all over the place, looking at things and checking out things. There's an old LST [landing ship tank]. Five of them in a row blew up in 1945 and there was one still down there, half-sticking out of the water that they tried to pull out. They put big chains through it, and they're trying to pull it out with a Caterpillar, and they couldn't quite do it. So it's slightly offshore and I used to swim out to that, go on board and stuff. And it's totally something I shouldn't have been doing, but I did in those days. It was no problem.

Then I used to ride over to Waipahu, and then I'd ride up in the fields, and as I got older my grandmother had a motorcycle [that I rode]. She was getting to the point where she couldn't ride any longer. She was seventy-nine years old and I took it away from her. I told her—this is Kenny's mother and my dad's—I told her that I was going to paint it.

Nobody else could do anything with her. Kenny or Zed [Zadoc] or my dad would suggest, "Mother, why don't you do this? Don't ride your motorcycle anymore." And they would complain to me that she wouldn't listen. Then [she'd] go riding, and she got shorter and shorter as she got older, she couldn't reach the ground anymore, and it would tip over on her. And big burns on her legs, and she was a tough old lady.

"What happened to your legs?"

"I burned it with my motorcycle."

Big burns. And it would heal up, but they were really afraid that she was going to get in an accident. Seventy-nine years old riding a motorcycle, and people would come and heckle her because she would be riding her little BSA motorcycle, and people would come by and kind of tease her a bit.

So my uncles and my dad were kind of complaining to me that she was still riding and they couldn't get the motorcycle away from her. I had a wonderful relationship with her so I went to her and said, "Dude [GB's grandmother's nickname], I'm going to paint your motorcycle." So I took it down to my parents' house and never took it back.

And I think she knew at the time that it was probably time that she didn't ride it anymore. She continued to ride her bicycle, but she didn't ever ask me about it or anything. But none of her sons could do it, I was like the fourth son to her. So when things had to be done at my grandmother's house, a lot of times they'd tell me and I would do it. Somehow they couldn't do it, but I could do it.

Anyway, getting back to how things changed in Waipahu, as subdivisions came up, I started riding the motorcycle all over O'ahu Sugar, too, and up to Wahiawā, and out to 'Ewa, and all over the place [on] my grandmother's motorcycle. And as time went on, and more and more housing developed, I'd have to take more circuitous routes up through the cane fields, and it finally got to the point where they started blocking off the roads. There's too many people on O'ahu, and they put chains up and gates up. And by that time, actually, I had moved to my grandmother's house. And in the mid-sixties, 1967, things were drastically different in 1967 than they were prior to that.

HY: Did you interact at all with the people in the upcoming subdivisions around in that area?

GB: No, I didn't.

HY: Okay. And were you still able to do target practice and that kind of thing . . .

GB: No.

HY: . . . or did it curtail all those activities?

GB: Yeah, all those activities. Once the houses went in, probably '65, or probably 1963, '64, we had basically curtailed the target practice in one area, though we were still shooting on the other side of the yard, away from where the first subdivision was. We still shot down below. And that was skeet, and every once in a while a .22[-caliber] and so on, but that curtailed quite a bit. Then that subdivision came in where my great-grandmother's house was, and then we stopped completely, no more shooting.

HY: Okay, so getting back to your going to UH, getting involved in ag—you graduated from UH?

GB: Mm hmm.

HY: And what year was this?

GB: That was 1969.

HY: And what happened after that?

GB: I was hired by Amfac and went to work—I graduated in December of 1969, and January 1 was my first day of work at Amfac. I was hired as an agricultural trainee. Very auspicious, the first day of work was January 1, 1970, and that was a holiday.

(Laughter)

GB: I always thought that was great. So I reported to work January 2, downtown. And so I wore a coat and tie, go up to the fourteenth floor, whatever floor it was, where the ag group was, worked in there. They sent me to HSPA [Hawai'i Sugar Planters' Association] a few days later, the sugar agricultural experiment station, where I took a four-month course. Then at the end of the course I worked for a few weeks at 'Ewa Plantation, which was O'ahu Sugar [Company] then, 'Ewa was brought out by Amfac. 'Ewa was a Castle & Cooke plantation, but it was merged into O'ahu Sugar, and so I worked at 'Ewa [with a] lot of the old guys I worked with as a schoolboy hire at O'ahu Sugar. [I went] back and forth doing specific projects, and then they sent me to Kaua'i, to the Lihue Plantation, I spent about nine months. Then they sent [me] to Pioneer Mill [Company] here, again, an Amfac plantation. I've been on Maui ever since.

HY: I think we're about to run out of tape.

END OF SIDE TWO

TAPE NO. 30-6-1-98; SIDE ONE

HY: Let's see, okay. I was going to ask you about. . . . Now how did you get your position at Amfac?

GB: I went in and I applied for it, and I was chosen. They would pick up a trainee about every year to go into the ag group. And as people retired from the plantation, then these people would take over. The fellow just the previous year before me was named Martin Pitney. There



was a fellow after me. But every year or so they would pick up somebody. And they'd fit 'em into various slots, and again, as people retired, they would move people around from plantation to plantation.

And I was scheduled to go to Puna [Sugar Company] plantation to become an agriculturalist over there, but I was also doing an important irrigation project here at Pioneer Mill, so they kept me here rather than sending me over there. I helped to install the first drip irrigation, and designed and installed and operated and maintained the first drip fields over at Pioneer Mill, which allowed not only Pioneer Mill, but the rest of the sugar industry to last as long as it did.

I go to the Mainland and other national and international drip conferences with other people from other plantations that were involved in drip irrigation. We'd have monthly meetings and so on, but I very, very, very much enjoyed that job.

And so I stayed at Pioneer Mill, and then the civil engineering department had left, the manager of Pioneer asked me to take that job. So I became the civil engineer department head.

HY: Who was the manager?

(Goat audible in the background.)

GB: At the time, [William] Garvey Hall.

HY: What year was it that you moved here then?

GB: Nineteen seventy-one.

HY: Okay. Is that [the goat] a baby?

GB: That's a baby. He wants to eat.

(Geese audible in the background.)

HY: Oh. They're [the geese] tuned in to something that's totally different. (Laughs) Okay, so in '71.

GB: Yeah.

HY: I'm blanking on the name you just said.

GB: Garvey Hall.

HY: Garvey Hall.

GB: Jack Siemer was the manager. And Jack was then moved up in the organization, he moved to Honolulu, and Garvey Hall took his place here. Garvey was originally my boss's boss in the ag group in Honolulu, and he came over here to Maui and asked me to take over the civil engineering department and the drip irrigation was handled by somebody else that they hired.



HY: And how long [were you there]?

GB: Eight years.

HY: Eight years. So in the meantime, your folks are still at Waipi'o . . .

GB: Yeah.

HY: And then who lived on [at Waipi'o] after your folks?

GB: Well, my mom passed away in '87, and then my dad in 1989 got pneumonia and we put him in the hospital. We then got him into a retirement home kind of a care facility where he lived until he passed away in 1993. My son Keoki [George Brown IV] was there in about 1990, 1991, going to the University of Hawai'i, so he lived there. And I would go down, almost on a weekly basis to check in to see how the property was doing, see how Keoki was doing, and also go visit my dad.

HY: Did the Watanabe family stay on there?

GB: No, no. Watanabe retired in probably the late [19]50s. And so Ted and Elsie—Ted became the head yardman [after] Shohei Oda had retired and went to work for the city and county. So Ted and Elsie came, Ted became the head yardman, and he had a couple people below him.

(Dog farts in the background.)

HY: Eeee.

GB: She [dog] does that [fart].

HY: Yeah, that's what they do.

GB: Mm hmm.

HY: So, they did not stay on either.

GB: Well, then they retired. And they didn't stay on the property, no. And that house, after Ted and Elsie moved out, it was an old house that my dad had moved onto the property from our family cemetery, which was on Waipi'o Peninsula. And that was a caretaker's house for the family cemetery. But when the navy took it over, dad moved the house to Waipi'o, our property, and we had to move all the graves from the graveyard up to Nu'uau. And where the graveyard was, was near the entrance of Ted Makalena Golf Course.

HY: So your son stayed there for how long then?

GB: He was there for about three years, living down there, going to the University of Hawai'i.

HY: Was there anybody after him?

GB: No. Nobody after him in the family. When we turned it over to the Queen Emma Foundation,

there was a group of people that lived there for a while, I believe.

HY: You were renting to . . .

GB: Well, Queen Emma was renting to . . .

HY: Oh, after you.

GB: After us.

HY: Oh, I see.

GB: But, we were the last Browns to stay there and then when we sold out to Queen Emma Foundation they . . .

HY: And what year was that?

GB: Well we sold most of the property in 1989, but retained the house and then we sold the remaining half acre, which included the pool house and the pool and part of the tennis court, in probably 1995.

HY: Okay. After your eight years here working at Pioneer Mill, then what?

GB: I started a business with a friend of mine, we bought a subdivision in Lahaina, and we were building houses. We did build some houses, design and built the houses. I was still working plantation in the initial phases of this, but I got to the point where I couldn't do both. So I resigned from the plantation and did that for about four years. And then he bought me out.

HY: Who was your partner?

GB: Ben [Bennett] Baldwin. I went into the windsurfing industry and attempted to manufacture a windsurfing harness, patented harness. One of my partners had patented it, Barry Spanier. And Geoff Bourne was the other partner. The three of us were going to do this windsurfing harness company because Geoff and Barry were in the sail-making business, and a very successful sail-making business.

And we did this harness company and I went to Taiwan, as did Barry, and we set up some manufacturing and so on, and we brought a few harnesses in. And the companies that we had talked to about selling our harness for us said that they would be happy to do that and that they would manufacture it for us even, but that if somebody copied our harness, then we had to go after those copies as an infringement of the patent. They'd pay us royalty, but we would have to fight the legal battle. And we decided we couldn't do that.

Some of the companies were immediately copying us. As a matter of fact, going to Taiwan, and going to a sub-supplier over there, and the sub-supplier was making the same harness and putting their label on it. So we decided that we weren't going to pursue that because it would have been a legal battle and we would have lost more money than we did.

Right now about 95 percent of the people in the world are using our idea. And this is what the

fellow that invented windsurfing said when we first showed him our harness. He said, "Within a couple of years everybody's going to be using this. This makes so much sense." The harness was around the hips rather than the shoulders and the chest. More power and more control. And the fellow was right in that almost everybody's using it, but it wasn't two years, it was ten years, before they did that. So people are using it today all over the world. And we just didn't have the inclination or the money to fight the legal battles.

HY: And after that?

GB: After that (pause), that's a good question. After that I started a company with my then-brother-in-law, my former brother-in-law now, an interval ownership company, a small hotel in Waikīkī, time-share. And we went into business, fifty-fifty partners, and things went from okay to bad to worse, and I sold out to them.

And I then went into a project with a ski company in Telluride, Colorado; we developed a building, and I was to retain some of the property, some of the commercial condo[mini] spaces, as well as some of the residential condo spaces. And it was a 65,000 square-foot building. Ski company still has our offices in it. And I sold my residential condos and the last part of the commercial condos are in escrow. And I now am going into stocks, the stock market, doing some investing.

HY: I just wanted to ask you about your kids now. I know that you grew up with this sort of a boarding school legacy. Is this something that you've continued with your family?

GB: No.

HY: What was your thinking about that?

GB: Well, I'd like to have stayed home. I'd like to have gone to Punahou or Hawai'i Prep. I think I missed out on a lot of experiences in Hawai'i, although I gained many experiences back there. And when all is said and done it's hard to say how it would've been different. And I wouldn't change any of that for myself because I'm here right now.

However, for my kids, I wanted them to be at home. I wanted to see 'em, I didn't want to have them away at school. I think, when I went away, it was just kind the end of an era, where kids of families who could afford it did go away to school to get an education. Not that Taft was so much better, or any better than 'Iolani or Punahou or Hawai'i Prep. It probably was somewhat better, but each student will get out of a school what that student wants to get out of a school. So you back that out of the equation, do I want to have my kids around or not, well I did. And I think it was fair for them to be around here.

I've only seen about three or four people since I left Taft, in the four years that I went there, since then. I graduated in 1964. I don't have any contacts with those people on an ongoing basis. I could see if I lived in Connecticut, or Washington, or New York, or someplace like that. I may have had an opportunity to see them more often. But coming from Hawai'i, almost no contact with those people. And so it didn't make sense. It would've made more sense for me to go to Punahou or Hawai'i Prep. And many of those people are still here. I still see a lot of those people, quite frequently. So I didn't want my kids to have that same experience.

I saw myself going back to prep school at a substantial cost to my parents. I didn't study. I was just kind of marking time in school. If my kids were to mark time at school, why not have them mark time here rather than back East. It wasn't really the money aspect of it, it was the other aspects of school that were important, family aspects. And they wanted to be here anyway.

And they had way more say than I did. I didn't even question it, whereas my kids [question] everything that we and their mother did. So it was just a different time. I'd never considered even when I was going to school back there, if I ever had kids, I don't recall specifically thinking about this, but I would not have had them, even then, when I was at school, I would not have thought to have the kids go back here.

(Geese very audible in the background.)

HY: Let me just ask you a question about identity, your ethnicity. How did you think about your ethnicity? Or did you?

GB: Well, I was proud of it. And a lot of my friends in the [19]50s at Punahou, many of those kids were from missionary families. And we'd go to parties and I'd always get this feeling that there's a lot of them that would like to have been part-Hawaiian—the ones that weren't, there was a few that were. And I was always proud to have at least a little bit of Hawaiian in me, I'd like to have more Hawaiian. I remember thinking, I'd like to be more Hawaiian. And I was very proud. I remember one fellow in particular would kind of tease me about it. And my father and uncles would say it's only because he would like to have been part-Hawaiian, too.

And it was an interesting situation to be in, because as people started to bad-mouth the missionaries for some of the things they did, I could distance myself from that because I have some relatives that are missionaries, but I'm not directly related. I don't have a missionary in my background—through marriage and through that type of thing, years and years later, after the missionaries were basically not missionaries. I was proud to be Hawaiian, once I realized that I was.

HY: When you say once you realized, was there a point when you weren't really aware of that?

GB: Yeah, I wasn't really aware. I wasn't really aware of any real differences. Language, as an example, going up to the Mainland to camp when I was eleven years old, I used to remember Hawaiian words growing up. And my mom did, too, she learned them.

(Taping interrupted, then resumes.)

GB: So ask again.

HY: Yeah. So you felt proud of . . .

GB: Yeah, I felt proud of being a Hawaiian.

HY: But you said you kind of didn't have an awareness of who you were, I guess.

GB: Yeah, I didn't have an awareness of being Hawaiian, or even necessarily of coming from

Hawai'i as being different than any place else until I went to camp. I was waiting on a table one night, and it was the first time I was waiting tables, and I went up to the first guy that I had to take his plate away, he was finished. So I said, "You *pau*?" And he didn't say anything, like he didn't hear me. So I kind of nudged him and I said, "Are you *pau*?" And he looked at me, and he didn't know what I was talking about. And I know *pau* and finish are the same word, I use them interchangeably. Mostly *pau*, but I knew *pau* also meant finished. I didn't know *pau* was Hawaiian. And so [I was] eleven years old and, "Hmm, this guy doesn't know *pau*." And I somehow figured out, I have to ask him if I can take his plate away, if he's *pau*, okay, "Are you finished?"

And he said, "Yeah."

So it was very clear to me that *pau* was not a word that these people on the Mainland understood. And it just dawned on me. What is that? We use that in Hawai'i. I didn't know. One certain thing led to the next and next.

Then some of my classmates, fifth and sixth grade, were also Hawaiian. And they were proud of it because of their grandparents, they talk to their grandparents about being Hawaiian. And I talked with my dad about it. But I didn't know my grandfather, but I knew Uncle Francis. And Uncle Francis was half-Hawaiian. And he was a very gracious, very outgoing, very generous man, and I liked that. And I attributed that to possibly his Hawaiian-ness.

HY: The discussions you had with your father, what would you talk about with regards to your [being Hawaiian].

GB: Well, I asked him about the family and he'd tell me about Irene I'i, which was his grandmother, and this was his family. And how he would sit around and listen to her—she was pure Hawaiian, full-blooded Hawaiian—listen to her, talk with her other *kanaka* friends, they were speaking Hawaiian. And he picked up a lot of Hawaiian doing that. Because in his later years, shortly before he died, he started singing Hawaiian songs I'd never heard before. I'd never heard anybody sing these songs. And I attribute that to him learning when he was a kid, some part of his mind going back to that time.

And he started saying Hawaiian words that he never used at home, but that I subsequently learned the meaning of. I didn't even know he knew those words, because I picked them up from other places, on the plantation or whatever. Because there was a number of Hawaiian words used on the plantations over the years to describe certain things, that carry over from a hundred years ago. And he was using more words, a lot more words, other words that I had learned from studying. And I realized that when he was sitting around listening to his grandmother and her friends talk, that he was picking this Hawaiian up.

And they'd be weaving and sitting around talking and he would tell me about the parrots that she had. She had parrots that were tri-lingual. They speak English—well, they say English words, they say Hawaiian words. And when my great-grandmother [went] away to another island or something, the parrots would stay with the Japanese people that were taking care of her property. So they say Japanese words. And it seems that they would just say the Japanese words only in connection with other Japanese words. Or Hawaiian words only in connection with other Hawaiian words. They wouldn't say a Hawaiian word and a Japanese word and an English word. If they're saying Hawaiian words, they'd just say Hawaiian words.



So he told me about those stories. He told me about some of his buddies that were also Hawaiian. He told me about his father, my grandfather, and great uncle. He would talk about Aunt Rose and going over there and working at Waialua. And Aunt Rose was a very dignified half-Hawaiian lady. And she'd come over and she'd always be impeccably dressed and have her *lei* on, *lau hala* hat. And Uncle Francis would have a feather *lei* on his hat all the time. And it was nice to not only hear the stories of these people, but to see those two people. And to kind of feel that Hawaiian-ness.

And now that there's a cultural resurgence, I can see those things that I saw in my great uncle and great aunt coming back in the way these current Hawaiians [are], some of the current Hawaiians, the older Hawaiians, the *kūpuna*. Just a feeling, just the way they talk, the way they move, the way they act.

HY: Okay, is there anything else you want to add? Anything we didn't cover?

GB: I don't know, we just gone on kind of.

HY: Any final thoughts about the place where you grew up that's now going to be quite different?

GB: Well, for me, there's a nostalgia of not only that place, but Hawai'i. I think it's gone from the physical realm—that will be gone from the physical realm—but then can be manifested in the relational realm between people. We've lost the Hawai'i that I remember. I used to love to hear stories that my dad would tell about his youth, or Uncle Francis would tell about his youth, or some of the people that grew up in Hawai'i years and years ago. And there's a part of me that really yearns for that. However, Hawai'i may not only be in the memory as a place that's gone, but currently in how we deal with other people. I'd love to see this place [senior care center] out at Waipi'o develop into a place where people can go and can feel that comfort. Those coconut trees in the lower part of the yard, she planted them, my great-grandmother. And hopefully some of those survive and Queen Emma sees the need to preserve some of those things. Because they in themselves are a tradition. And some of those traditions—there's other plants that my parents had planted around there.

But in the spirit of the land there, there could be some really interesting things happening, of graciousness, of care giving, a hospitable spot. I'd like to see that happen.

HY: Okay, anything else?

GB: That's all I can think of.

HY: Thank you so much.

GB: You're welcome.

END OF INTERVIEW



# **I‘i/Brown Family: Oral Histories**

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Social Science Research Institute  
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